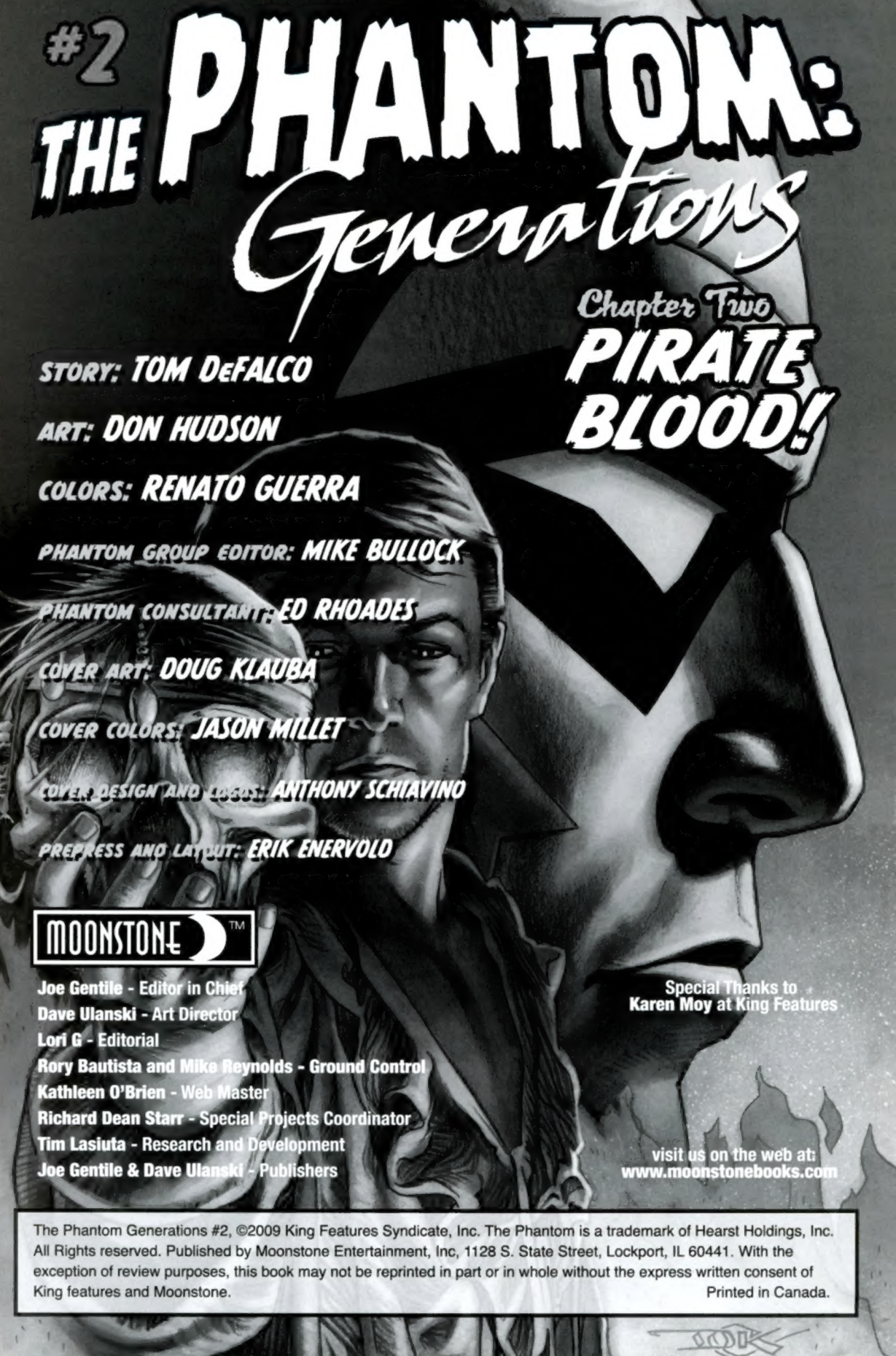
THE PHANTOM: Generations
#2
MOONSTONE
$3.99
Chapter Two
PIRATE BLOOD!
by TOM DEFALCO and DON HUDSON


#2
THE PHANTOM:
Generations
Chapter Two
PIRATE BLOOD!
STORY: TOM DEFALCO
ART: DON HUDSON
COLORS: RENATO GUERRA
PHANTOM GROUP EDITOR: MIKE BULLOCK
PHANTOM CONSULTANT: ED RHOADES
COVER ART: DOUG KLAUBA
COVER COLORS: JASON MILLET
COVER DESIGN AND LOGOS: ANTHONY SCHIAVINO
PREPRESS AND LAYOUT: ERIK ENERVOLD
MOONSTONE ™
Joe Gentile - Editor in Chief
Dave Ulanski - Art Director
Lori G - Editorial
Rory Bautista and Mike Reynolds - Ground Control
Kathleen O'Brien - Web Master
Richard Dean Starr - Special Projects Coordinator
Tim Lasiuta - Research and Development
Joe Gentile & Dave Ulanski - Publishers
Special Thanks to
Karen Moy at King Features
visit us on the web at:
www.moonstonebooks.com

The Phantom Generations #2, ©2009 King Features Syndicate, Inc. The Phantom is a trademark of Hearst Holdings, Inc. All Rights reserved. Published by Moonstone Entertainment, Inc, 1128 S. State Street, Lockport, IL 60441. With the exception of review purposes, this book may not be reprinted in part or in whole without the express written consent of King features and Moonstone.
Printed in Canada.

The jungle drums echoed along the coast of Bangalla, spreading their urgent message from tribe to tribe. With narrowed eyes and grim smiles, heads nodded to the rhythmic thumping that called one and all to war. Warriors sharpened spearheads. Women oiled bows and children gathered small stones for slings. Everyone prepared for war. War with the savage invaders! War with those who plundered innocent villages! War with the heartless killers who attacked without cause or conscience! War with the pirates led by the one called Killer Khan!

A lone rider listened to the talking drums as his horse galloped along an ancient trail that led from the dense jungle known to the locals as the Deep Woods. Tall and broad of shoulder, he was dressed rather strangely for the jungle or anywhere else for that matter. Armed with a German-made wheel-lock pistol and a razor-sharp cutlass, he wore a tight bodysuit with a wide belt. A hood and a thin mask completed his odd attire.

Kit Walker had little use for pirates. They had murdered his grandfather and his father had spent most of his life bringing them to justice. In fact, his father had even sworn a sacred oath to devote himself and his sons "*to the destruction of piracy, greed, cruelty and injustice.*"

Kit had always known that he would eventually take up his father's crusade. He had trained for the job since early childhood. He exercised, ran, boxed, and lifted weights, practicing until he had mastered every known martial art and weapon. He read everything about pirates and their customs. He studied science, history, economics and geography. Every day was spent learning and preparing. Yet, his father's sudden and violent death had still taken him by surprise. Two years had passed since Kit had first donned his father's distinctive costume and he still wondered if he were worthy of it. He still doubted his ability to be the Phantom.

As he reined his horse toward the northern village of Nkatta, whose chief had sounded the call to arms, Kit wondered how his father would feel about his current mission. Instead of joining the tribes against the pirates, Kit was determined to stop the war and save them from harm.

As his horse thundered along the path, the masked man's mind raced back to his recent meeting with the Spaniard.

"How could you possibly be the same man who once helped my father?" The Spaniard had begun the conversation, his eyes burning with suspicion. Don Felipe de la Halcon was immaculately dressed in the fine clothes and splendid colors that dominated the current fashion among the Spanish nobility.

"You're much too young." Felipe said as he dabbed at his nose with a perfumed handkerchief.

Although his face remained impassive, Kit was not surprised by the Spaniard's reactions. He was obviously too young to be the same Phantom who had aided the older Don Halcon But Kit's father had insisted that he pretend to be the same man, a tradition his own sons and their sons were also expected to follow. Kit had never believed his father's plan would actually work. He was wrong. It had succeeded on many occasions and the legend of the Ghost Who Walks had begun to spread.

"There's an old jungle saying," Kit said, "Many of are the mysteries of the Phantom."

Reaching into a leather pouch that hung from his belt, he removed a large object wrapped in red velvet. "Your father gave this to me the last time we met."

As if expecting to find a venomous insect within the cloth, the Spaniard cautiously unwrapped it. His eyes suddenly grew wide and he rapidly blessed himself. Encrusted with large rubies, a cross of solid gold sparkled in his trembling hands. "'Tis the Cross of San Paolo."

"I do not know how you managed to retain your youth, but I cannot doubt the proof of my own eyes," the Spaniard said as soon as he could catch his breath. "Forgive me for doubting you, senor."

"I don't blame you for being suspicious," Kit mumbled as he rewrapped the cross, unable to look the Spaniard in the face. "Now tell me why you have come all the way to Bangalla to find me."

"I am here on behalf of the King of Spain and a noble family held in high regard by his court. It seems this family has a daughter who recently came of marriageable age. To his credit, her father arranged a most advantageous match with a noble of considerable wealth and stature. When she learned her would-be bridegroom was also significantly older, the insubordinate young woman spurned the wedding. Her father naturally and quite rightly insisted that she abide by his wishes.

As headstrong as she is beautiful, she secretly boarded a merchant ship bound for the New World. The ship was later attacked by pirates under the command of a blackheart known as Killer Khan. His home port is believed to be somewhere in Bangalla and he has demanded a fortune in gold for her safe return."

"The family is unable to raise the ransom?" Kit asked.

"On the contrary, the King himself has offered to supply it." Felipe snorted. "Unfortunately, there is no honor among pirates and Killer Khan has a less than sterling reputation for keeping his end of a bargain. Even if we pay the ransom, there is no guarantee that Marabella will be returned."

"Her name is Marabella?"

"Marabella Colón. She is the granddaughter of Cristóbal Colón, the man you may know as Christopher Columbus."

Kit immediately agreed to help secure Marabella's freedom. Although the Spaniard did not realize it, Kit shared a personal connection with Christopher Columbus. His grandfather had served as a cabin boy for the famous explorer.

For the next few weeks, Kit employed the jungle grapevine in his search for Killer Khan. No sooner had he learned where the pirate docked his ships than the drums began to sound.

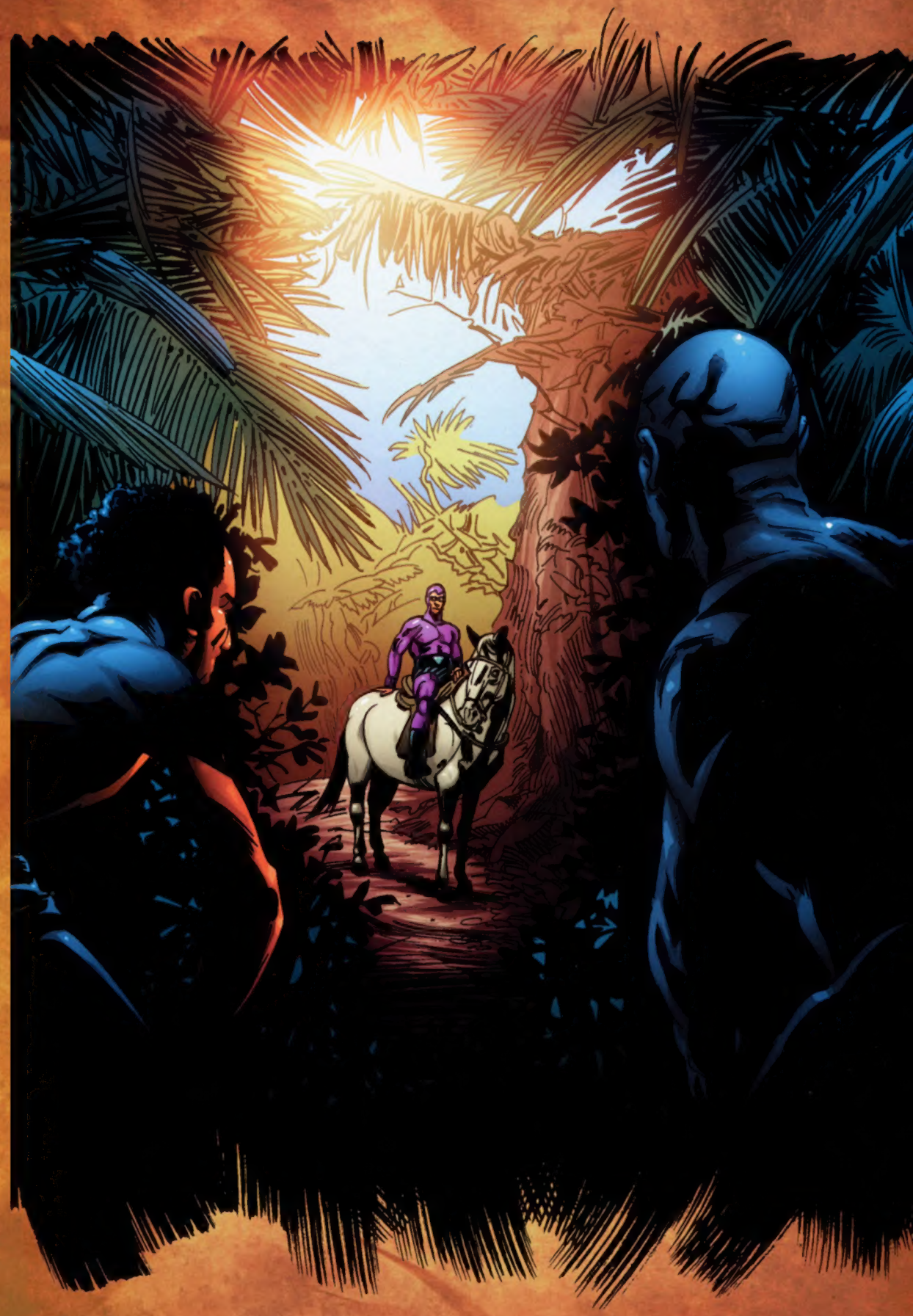
Kit reined his horse to a slow trot. Only a few miles separated him from the village of Nkatta and he knew his presence had already been detected. Without alerting the silent watchers who surrounded him, Kit used a casual glance here and a seemingly bored look there to spot each and every one of them.

As he approached a small clearing, Kit pulled his horse to stop and focused his attention on a leafy bush that squatted to the left of the trail.

"I come in peace, " Kit said, "I seek Nbanto who rules the village of Nkatta."

Only silence answered the Phantom for the span of dozen heartbeats and then a lone warrior slowly rose from behind the leafy bush. A jagged scar, one that had never healed properly, ran down the right side of his face and followed the curve of his jaw line. The warrior stood a full head taller than Kit and his muscled arms held a hunting bow with an arrow notched and aimed for the masked man's heart, like a cobra poised to strike.

"Who are you to demand an audience with our noble chief during this time of war?" the warrior asked.



"I am the Phantom of the *Deep Woods* and my words are for Nbanto alone." Kit said as he slid from his saddle.

A look of surprise filled the eyes of the warrior and he slowly eased the pressure on his bowstring. "We have heard of the masked man who dwells among the fierce warriors of the Bandar. It is said you have lived for more moons than are allotted most men."

"Aye," Kit said, silently giving his father his due. "Will you take me to Nbanto?"

The warrior stood frozen for more than a minute. Then, he slowly lowered his bow and barked a sharp command. A dozen warriors sprang from their hiding places. They, too, lowered their spears and bows. One of them took a few steps reluctant forward and extended a trembling hand. A grim smile lit the masked man's face as he turned over the reins of his horse. Another warrior reached for his weapons, but quickly withdrew his hand under the Phantom's stony gaze.

The scarred warrior stared deeply into Kit's eyes, as if trying to pierce the very soul of the man who stood before him. A cautious smile crawled across the warrior's lips. He abruptly turned on his heal, ordering his comrades to follow. Completely surrounded, Kit accompanied them to the village of Nkatta with his head held high. He secretly wondered if the second Phantom would also be the last.

As they neared the village, two warriors broke off from the pack, racing ahead with news of their captive. A tall wall composed of logs and sun-hardened mud ringed the village. Dozens upon dozens of hastily slapped together huts sprawled on the ground outside the wall. Kit was immediately struck by the abundance of young warriors who prowled the area, polishing their weapons or practicing their combat skills. From the subtle differences in their dress to the symbols painted on their faces and chests, Kit noted that these fighting men represented at least a dozen diverse tribes.

Nbanto slammed a massive fist against a wooden serving tray, shattering it in half. He wore a headdress of vivid feathers and polished bones. A necklace made from the teeth of more than a dozen savage predators adorned his naked chest.

"Deadly and feared are the pygmy warriors of the Bantu with their poison spears and unmatched courage.

Yet, they have failed to heed my call to war, " Nbanto growled. "More than a dozen tribes have sent me their finest warriors. My army grows with each passing moon. Only the Bantu have not joined me. Why? Why?"

Kit stood straight and proud. He knew he had to tread carefully. Nbanto's temper was legendary and he would pounce on any hint of weakness. "The Bantu have great respect for mighty Nbanto, slayer of lions and men. They have sent me because Killer Khan and his pirate crew must be punished. They must be brought to justice."

"Aye," Nbanto agreed, a sinister grin revealing sharpened teeth. "Jungle justice."

"There is no need for war," the Phantom said "Not when one man can stop Killer Khan."

"And you think you are that man?" Nbanto roared with laughter.

"I do," Kit answered in a cold voice that did not betray his own doubts.

"The pirate devils have raised a fortress on the edge of the jungle. They possess weapons of great destruction and their warriors number in the hundreds. Only a fool or a madman would throw his life away on such a hopeless quest."

"Death holds no fear for the Phantom," Kit said. "I am the *Ghost Who Walks.*"

Nbanto leaned back on his jungle throne and studied the masked man. "Why do I suspect you're hiding something? Is it only the pirates you seek?"

"He has taken an innocent hostage, a Spanish noblewoman," Kit said after a slight pause.

"Ahhh, I should have known there would be woman involved," Nbanto laughed. He clapped his hands together three times and his warriors immediately began to spread out, forming a large circle around the Phantom.

"If you wish leave to capture the pirate devils and free your woman, you must prove yourself worthy," Nbanto said with anticipation, "In the arena of death!"

Kit stood bare-chested in the makeshift arena. He had removed the top half of his costume. His father had always cautioned him to keep his face hidden so he retained his hood and mask. His own weapons had been removed and replaced with a round wooden shield and a short, thick club.

Kit faced three other warriors who were similarly armed; the man with the scarred face he had encountered earlier; one who was short, squat and built like the stump of a wide tree and a third who was tall, lithe and moved with the fluid grace of panther.

They were all naked save for a scanty cloth wrapped around their loins and leather sandals on their feet. Kit silently named them Scarface, Stump and Panther.

The so-called arena was actually a lopsided circle that had been drawn in the ground. Its diameter measured about fifteen feet. The rest of Nbanto's warriors stood along its edge, jeering and shouting as they jabbed their spears at any combatant who moved within reach.

With a low grunt and a vigorous wave, Nbanto signaled the fight to begin.

The Phantom immediately sprang into action, diving toward the ground in front of the one he called Stump. Tucking himself into a ball, he shoulder-rolled forward and used his legs like pistons to propel him upward with added force. He struck the surprised Stump directly in the stomach, knocking the air from his lungs and slamming him head over heals.

As Stump frantically struggled to regain his breath, Panther closed in, swinging his club for the masked man's head. Reacting on instinct, the Phantom ducked beneath it and pivoted on the ground, before jackhammering his foot into his opponent's left kneecap. Panther screamed in agony as he collapsed.

With Panther and Stump momentarily incapacitated, the Phantom somersaulted to his feet and faced Scarface. With an angry growl, Scarface raced forward and hammered blow after unrelenting blow upon the shield that the masked man had barely managed to raise in time. Pressing his advantage, Scarface forced the Phantom backward, step by step, closer and closer to the spear tips straining to reach his back. To add to his misery, his wooden shield began to buckle and crack under Scarface's constant barrage. The Phantom realized that death was only instants away.

Scarface whipped his club downward with a snarl of triumphant, shattering the Phantom's shield in half. Already anticipating his victory, Scarface slowly raised his club for a killing stroke, but he had severely misjudged the Phantom's fighting spirit. The masked man leaped forward, whipping the remaining half of his shield across Scarface's jaw, slapping him repeatedly until the dazed man wobbled drunkenly before crumpling to the ground like a felled tree.

Meanwhile, Stump had finally regained his feet and breath. With a savage bellow, he charged toward the Phantom like a maddened buffalo. The masked man held his ground. At the last possible moment, he gracefully sidestepped the onrushing warrior and pounded the remains of his wooden shield into the back of Stump's head.

The warriors in Stump's path dropped their spears and scrambled for safety as the unconscious man crashed among them.

The Phantom turned and saw that only Panther remained conscious. Holding his injured knee with one hand and in obvious pain, Panther held his club defiantly, fully prepared to fight until his dying breath.

Turning to face Nbanto, the Phantom dropped his club and said, "I told you I came in peace. I have no desire to do further harm to these brave warriors."

Nbanto locked his gaze on Kit for a seemingly endless moment and then smiled in approval. "So be it. The Phantom is a warrior of great skill and courage. Nbanto and his people will be honored to call you friend."

"For the sake of our new friendship, can you call off the war against Killer Khan?"

"That I cannot do," Nbanto shook his head with genuine sadness. "These pirate devils have ravaged our villages, slaughtered our children and stolen our women. They must pay for their crimes. It is my destiny to lead the tribes against them."

"What of the innocent woman I vowed to rescue?"

"For the sake of friendship, I will delay the attack for three moons," Nbanto said, gravely. "If it be the will of the gods, you will save her and be long gone before our thirsty spears drink pirate blood."

His horse and arms returned, the Phantom raced toward the coastline. It was already late afternoon. The first f his precious moons would be rising in a few hours. He had to rescue Marabella and find a way to avert a war. How? He did not have the slightest idea. Should he approach the pirates under a flag of truce and warn them of the impending attack? Should he sneak into their fortress and try to spirit Marabella away?

His father had kept meticulous diaries, recording his adventures in great detail. A practice Kit had continued because he believed they would be helpful to future Phantoms. Unfortunately, neither of them had ever faced a situation quite like this.

Nbanto thought it was his destiny to unite the tribes and lead them against Killer Khan. Kit had a destiny of his own to consider. His father's dream of a line of Phantoms that continued from generation to generation could very well end with him.

He had yet to take a wife and little hope of finding one in the next few hours. The legend of the *Ghost Who Walks* would come to a sudden stop if he died during this mission.

The moon was already shining by the time the Phantom reached the pirate stronghold. Leaving his horse behind, he studied the fortress from the safety of the jungle. The pirates had chosen the site of their new home with great care. It stood within a protected cove, far removed from a wide stretch of sandy beach. More than a dozen long boats lay upside down on the edge of the beach, just out of reach of the evening tides. Five ships lay at anchor in the nearby bay.

The pirates had put their backs to building the outer wall of the fortress. It rose nearly fifteen feet in height and was composed of sturdy logs. A few dozen canon slots had been cut into the wall and faced the jungle. Flickering torches had been sporadically position along the wall's ramparts. The Phantom could see a few men idly chatting as they strode along the stockade's parapet. To his surprise, the sentries seemed bored and listless. These were not men on high alert. The pirates had surely heard the talking drums, but had failed to understand their message and did not realize the tribes were gathering for war.

Since Marabella was his priority, the Phantom decided to rescue her first and warn the pirates later. He observed the sentries for nearly an hour, noting their routine. He soon determined the best way to enter the fortress. When the time was right, the Phantom stole toward the stockade wall. He carried a rope woven from vines. With the skill that would be the envy of every cowboy, he lassoed one of the sharpened wooden spikes that protruded from the wall's ramparts. The Phantom did not hesitate. He scampered up the side of the wall and crossed its parapet before anyone could spot him. Leaping to the ground below, he hid amid the shadows.

A handful of buildings lay scattered before him. One stood out from all the rest. It was two stories high, possessing two large windows, a grand entrance and a covered veranda that rimmed the entire building. The Phantom instinctively knew it contained the quarters of Killer Khan and, possibly, those of Marabella as well.

Moving as silently as a living shadow, the Phantom neared the building. As he passed a small storage shed, he beheld a gruesome sight. A headless figure dangled upside down from a nearby flagpole. A figure dressed in the fine clothes and splendid colors of the Spanish nobility!

Kit soon found himself struggling to control his temper. Anger could only hamper him. Now was not the time for raw emotions. He needed to regain his composure and think clearly. The Spaniard must have grown impatient with his progress. Felipe de la Halcon paid the ultimate price for negotiating with the pirates without the Phantom's aid.

Harsh, brutal laughter suddenly erupted from the large building. Kit kept to the shadows as he slowly slithered closer. He began to make out separate voices.

"What's the matter, milady? Isn't the fare to your liking?" a gruff voice asked.

"The food is fine," a woman's voice responded, "'Tis the company I find offensive."

Crude suggestions mingled with the laughter followed.

Though he knew he risked exposure, the Phantom peered into the nearest window. A large company was enjoying a sumptuous feast at a long table. Killer Khan squatted at the table's head. He was a large bull of a man with bulging muscles and an unruly mane of black hair flicked with gray.

Seated to his right was the most beautiful woman that Kit had ever seen. She sat straight and proud, a fine example of the noble born.

"Have you reconsidered my proposal of marriage?" Khan asked. He tore a large chunk of meat off a nearby beef bone and shoved it into his mouth.

"Of course, I have," Marabella said as she daintily sipped her soup, "And I'd sooner slash my own throat than mate with a swine like you."

Once again, the pirates exploded with laughter.

"As you will, milady," Khan tossed his beef bone aside. "It wouldn't be the first time I've been made a widower before the wedding."

As he continued to gaze upon the lovely Marabella, Kit heard a board creak behind him. The back of his head suddenly exploded and a wave of unrelenting darkness swept over him.

A different kind of wave struck him full in the face, shocking him back to consciousness. As Kit opened his eyes, he instantly noted that his hands were bound behind him. He lay sprawled on the floor and was soaking wet.

"Welcome back, my friend,." Killer Khan laughed, handing a dripping bucket to one of his cohorts. "I hope you had a pleasant sleep."

"I could actually do with a few more hours," Kit said. "Could you come back a little later?"

"I'm afraid we must attend to a few formalities first," Khan said before he raised a booted foot and viciously kicked Kit in the ribs. "I believe you are the man known as the Phantom."

Kit bit back his pain. "You've heard of me?"

"Aye, every pirate who sails these waters knows of the mysterious masked man who destroyed our Scorpia brethren and took the daughter of Eric the Rover for his bride." Killer Khan said. "There's quite a large bounty on your head, my friend."

"Not as large as the one on yours, I'd reckon."

"Perhaps not," Khan laughed. "Still, large enough to make it worth my while to keep you alive. Although, I doubt the pirate council will quibble if you're a might damaged when they next convene."

"Let's hope we both live that long, "Kit said. "You must pack up and flee this fortress at once, Khan. The tribes are gathering for war and will soon be at your gates."

Khan stared down at Kit as if he were naught but a troublesome insect. "What have I to fear from these half-naked savages? Let them come! They'll rue the day they dared challenge my bloodthirsty band. It's my destiny to carve out a kingdom and rule this forsaken land. Anyone mad enough to defy me will die."

Without another word, Khan fell to kicking the helpless masked man. Kit endured it as long as he could before he again lost consciousness.

"Senor? Senor, can you hear me?"

Kit shook his head, trying to clear his thoughts and stabilize vision. The pirates had often returned to awaken him up before beating him back into unconsciousness.

"How... how many nights have past since I was brought here?" he asked.

"There was the night they captured you and one other," came the swift reply.

"We don't have much time," Kit mumbled as he tried to sit upright. A wave of nausea threatened to engulf him and almost sent him crashing back to floor. Kit looked around and realized he was alone. "Where are you?"

"Close enough to hear them torturing you, senor. We're on the second floor of this house of horror."

"We must escape before the tribes attack." The Phantom wiggled his fingers, trying to restore circulation. The constant beatings had actually served to loosen the ropes that bound his hands. He began to tense his body and use his great strength to stretch them further. He knew it was only a matter of time before he managed to slip free, but time was running out.

"I...I assumed that attack was just a bluff, senor."

"I'm afraid not, Marabella."

"Perhaps, it's just as well," she said. "Better to die quickly than suffer at the hands of these monsters."

"You're not going to die, Marabella," Kit said with conviction. "You have the word of the Phantom."

For the next several hours, Kit and Marabella conversed in hushed whispers as he continued to work his bonds. She spoke of her hopes and dreams. He described the Deep Woods and the Skull Cave he called home.

Knowing that night was fast approaching, the Phantom finally managed to work a hand loose. Any feelings of triumph died in the following instant as the jungle drums began to sound. Frantically, he tore free from his remaining bonds and sprang to his feet. He raced to the door and ripped it from its hinges. He stood within a long hallway that led to a staircase. Heavily bolted doors ran along both walls.

"Where are you, Marabella?" he shouted.

"Here! In here," she said, her voice coming from the door directly across from him.

The Phantom aimed a vicious kick at its bolted lock and gained immediate entrance.

"Come on," he said. "We must hurry."

"Where do you think you're going?"

Kick turned and saw a hulking pirate at the end of the hallway.

"The Khan will have my head if you escape," the brute said as he drew his cutlass. With an angry curse, he charged the Phantom.

Still carrying the rope that had bound his wrists, the Phantom whipped it upward, striking the pirate full in the face. Even as the pirate instinctively closed his eyes, the Phantom pounced, shotgunning fist after mighty fist into the man's unprotected nose until his knees melted beneath him.

Armed with the pirate's cutlass, the Phantom signaled Marabella to follow. They had barely reached the head of the stairs when the jungle drums suddenly ceased. A frightful, inhuman cry that was taken up by a thousand voices immediately shook the compound.

"What is it?" Marabella asked, "What's happening out there?"

"The attack has begun," the Phantom said grimly.

The pirates could soon be heard shouting and cursing as they raced to defend their fortress and fire their cannons. With Marabella behind him, the Phantom dashed down the staircase.

"Looks like you were right," Killer Khan sat with his feet on the long table. A jug of wine hung loosely in his hand. "The savages have come, but my cannons will make swift work of them. They'll all be slaughtered."

"You should have left when you could," the Phantom said. "You cannons are all pointed toward the jungle or the sea. The tribes aren't stupid. They'll concentrate their attack on your unprotected flanks. It's only a matter of time before they set fire to this entire stockade and burn it to the ground."

"Maybe," Khan shouted as he lurched to his feet, drawing his cutlass, "But you'll never live to see it."

Steel flashed and sparks flared as Killer Khan hurled himself upon the Phantom, trying to overpower him with sheer brute force. The Phantom stood his ground. He had studied under some of the greatest swordmasters of all. While he may have lacked the Khan's brutish strength, his skill was unsurpassed. Slowly, ever so slowly, the Phantom forced the Khan backward, ever backward. Realizing that he was outmatched, the pirate lord resorted to trickery and hurled a nearby stool at the masked man's head.

The Phantom ducked, momentarily exposing his breast. With a shout of victory, Killer Khan charged forward, thrusting his sword toward his enemy's unprotected heart. Barely an instant before the sword struck flesh, the Phantom twisted safely out of its path and slapped the flat of his blade against Khan's exposed sword arm, forcing him to drop his weapon.

Taking a step backward, Killer Khan reached for his belt and whipped out the Phantom's own wheel-lock pistol. "I've been meaning to thank you for this lovely gift. I've always wanted one of these German-made beauties."

A loud crack suddenly filled the air and Killer Khan sank to his knees. Marabella stood behind him, the remains of a shattered wine jug in her hand.

"What are you waiting for?" she said to the Phantom, "I thought we were in a hurry."

As he retrieved his pistol, Marabella took of a cutlass of her own. "You may need more help," she said.

"Your poor fiancé has no idea what's in store for him."

"I assume you mean my father's fiancé because he certainly isn't mine," Marabella said, her eyes flashing with mischief. "I intend to choose my own husband."

The Phantom merely smiled as he led her outside. Pirates scurried in terror as dark clouds of arrows rained from the sky. Fires had already sprouted throughout the compound.

"To the parapet," the Phantom shouted. "The fortress is about to fall."

Fighting their way past the panicked and leaderless pirates, the Phantom raced to the area directly over the cannons.

"As I suspected, this way is practically deserted. Our only hope is to try to reach the safety of the jungle."

He immediately climbed over the side, hung down as far as he could go and dropped the remaining distance. He signaled Marabella to follow and caught her as she fell. But their escape had not gone unnoticed. A dozen armed warriors soon surrounded them.

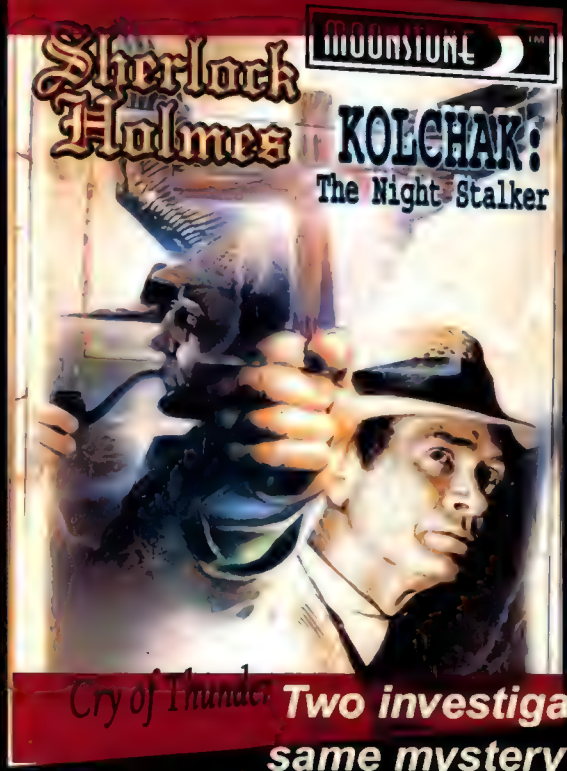
"I am the Phantom," he said without any hint of fear. "A friend to Nbanto and all the warriors he assembled."

"Aye, you must spare him." said a tall, lithe figure who slowly limped into view. "He is not one of these pirate devils."

"I am in your debt," the Phantom said to the man he thought of as Panther.

"As I am in yours. My sons and their sons shall hear of the day I fought the *Ghost Who Walks* and knew his mercy. Go in peace! Your horse awaits you."

With a protective arm around Marabella, the Phantom led her away from the screams of dying men and into the jungle. ●



Two investigators solving the same mystery 100 years apart!

AIRBOY

The original hero of the skies returns with new comic book adventures from series creator CHUCK DIXON!

Domino Lady
MOONSTONE
NEW ON-GOING Sexy-Noir Series
by NY Times Best-selling author
and Buffy novelist NANCY HOLDER!

THE
SPIDER
JUDGEMENT KNIGHT
MOONSTONE
New on-going series!
coming soon!

ROTTEN
"IT'S DEADWOOD BY WAY OF STEPHEN KING. IT'S UNDEADWOOD. IT'S WITTY, IT'S DISTURBING, AND IT'S A MUST READ."
Mark Waid, *Kingdom Come*

Max Allan Collins
Stuart M. Kaminsky
Robert Randisi
John Lutz
Carole Nelson Douglas
Mike W. Barr, Barbara Collins,
Eric Fein, Steven Grant,
CJ Henderson, Christine Matthews
Gail McAbee, Gary Phillips,
Adi tantimedh,
Kevin Van Hook,
& Fred Van Vliet
SEX, LIES AND PRIVATE EYES
Edited by Joe Gentile and Richard Dean Starr
featuring:
Alo Nudger, Fred Carver,
Blackshirt, Candy Matson,
Domino Lady, Kolchak,
Lai Wan, Jack Hagee,
Johnny Dollar, Mr Keen,
Pat Novak, Sherlock Holmes,
The Silencers The Envoy,
The Maze Agency, Toby Peters
Truxton Lewis, Sam Knight
and Max Heller!
available soon!
moonstonebooks.com

00211
8 91847 00220 9
THE PHANTOM
KOLCHAK: the Night Stalker
MOONSTONE NOIR
MOONSTONE MONSTERS
DOC SAVAGE
BUCKAROO BANZAI
CA CAPTAIN ACTION
Zorro
WWW.MOONSTONEBOOKS.COM

A
GREEN GIANT
SCAN
LIKE IT?
BUY IT!
DCP